



*"It takes everyone in a community to keep our homes, schools, offices, stores and other buildings safe."*

### City of Highland Building and Zoning

2610 Plaza Dr

PO Box 218

Highland, IL 62249

(618) 654-7115

(618) 654-5570

[www.highlandil.gov](http://www.highlandil.gov)



Feel free to contact Building and Zoning at 2610 Plaza Drive, (618)654-7115 or via e-mail at [highlandzoning@highlandil.gov](mailto:highlandzoning@highlandil.gov) should you have any questions or comments

**We're on the Web!**  
[www.highlandil.gov](http://www.highlandil.gov)

## From The Ground Up

Spring 2014

City of Highland's Community Development Mission Statement:

*To ignite positive change through orderly development and revitalization of quality construction while serving in a courteous professional, and ethical manner.*

### Maintaining your property

**A**s you maintain your property, remember whether it be a pile of leaves, grass clippings, fallen twigs or branches from winter or spring storms, you cannot burn these items within the city limits and you cannot place or rake them into the streets or ditches. City Ordinance fines for violating these items run between \$50.00 and \$750.00 per day/per occurrence.

Eight inches is the magical number one rule here in Highland. If you let your grass or weeds get to a height of 8 inches or greater, then you will become number 1 when it comes to the city enforcing the high grass ordinance. You can save yourself a lot of heartache and expense by making sure to keep your grass mowed (under 8 inches).

**I**s your living space getting cramped? Are you thinking about doing major repairs, remodeling or finishing out a basement to your house? If so, you will likely need to obtain a building permit for the work.

Why obtain a permit you ask?

To protect health safety and welfare of the people living in the house and any guests, it must be built to meet the currently city adopted building codes.

Building to codes will assure that your property resale value remains strong.

Assuring that your construction project was built to minimum code standards lessen the potential for any issues arising should you desire to sell your property in the future.

Simple things like painting, replacing flooring, or installing replacement windows do not require a permit. However if you want to put in a window or door where there was none, relocate a plumbing fixture, add electrical outlets, or replace an electrical panel; then these things all require a permit (this is just a short list of what may require a permit). In 2013 the city issued 216 building permits with an overall construction value

of over 13.1 million dollars.

**H**ow to protect yourself from being scammed by a less than honest contractor. First determine the work you want done, and stick to that list. Your list should also include special type of materials you want, a timeline for the work to be completed, how you intend to pay for the project and when you will pay the contractor (s).

Get a written estimate of the work, provided on the contractor's letterhead, with their name address and phone information. Ask for a list of written references that you can contact.

Avoid any contractor that:

- Contacts you or comes to your home uninvited

- Tells you that you need immediate repairs

- Pressures you to sign papers that day

- States they were doing work in the area and had leftover materials

- Asks you to pay for the total job upfront

- Offers a free or deeply discounted special price, today only

If they are working in Illinois, they are required to provide you a copy of the "Home Repair: Know Your Consumer Rights" pamphlet.

When ready to do the project, insist on a written contract. That contract shall include everything in writing, including who is responsible to pull permits for the work. You should not accept any written contract that you have not had a chance to read and understand. **If it has blank spaces, do not sign it.** You are entitled to receive a copy of all documents that they have you sign.

**FOR MORE INFORMATION, CHECK OUT THE ILLINOIS ATTORNEY GENERAL'S WEBSITE AT [WWW.ILLINOISATTORNEYGENERAL.GOV](http://WWW.ILLINOISATTORNEYGENERAL.GOV)**

**M**ayor Michaelis proclaimed the month of May as Building Safety Month. The International Code Council, each year in observance of Building Safety Month encourages Americans to consider projects to improve building safety and sustainability at home and in the community, and to acknowledge the essential service provided to all of us by local and state building departments, fire prevention bureaus and federal agencies in protecting lives and property in the buildings where we live, learn, work, worship and play.

**A**fter about 5 years, the City of Highland First Purchaser Rebate program has come to a close. This program was available only within the city limits, and only to the purchaser of a newly constructed detached single family residence. Staff feels that this program was beneficial and helped keep general contractors and their subcontractors working during the economic downturn, which created a domino effect on the local economy through material suppliers, bankers, real estate professionals, and local businesses such as restaurants and gas stations.